

“I’ve never met a more friendly or generous group of soldiers...in my nineteen years in the Marine Corps; the third or fourth night we were here they were giving...a going away dinner [for one of the ASTs]...and these people don’t make a lot of money...but they all chipped in and went out in town and bought him a lamb to show him their appreciation for all he had done for them.”

GySgt Robert M. Freeman, AST with Iraqi Security Forces



“I’ve got guys who anytime—anytime something happens, they’re jumping in front of me...one guy in particular, weight about one hundred pounds soaking wet with his cammies...he’s right there...trying to be my little human shield. You treat these guys with a little respect, and a little bit of interest and they’ll do anything for you.”

SSgt Tom L. McCarty, AST with Iraq Security Forces

Facing Page: SSgt Tom McCarty trails behind an ISF patrolling exercise in northern Fallujah.

Pages 86–89: ISF training continues.



“They know they’re here to capture and kill bad guys and if they hear that there’s bad guys out there, they go after ‘em. They don’t fear death. They don’t fear ordnance.”

GySgt William J. Orr, AST with Iraq Security Forces








*“One of the first things we had to realize is...
to quit thinking of them as Iraqis and think of
them as people.”*

Maj Benjamin J. Brown, Senior AST





“You need to get yourself in the mind-set that this is a special forces-type mission, something they normally do, and you need to get out of the mind-set that you’re gonna have anything, that you can rely on any sort of support from anybody, because it’s not there. You have to depend on yourself and depend on the Iraqis and really work well with them.”

GySgt William J. Orr, describing his marching orders

Left: Marine ASTs return to the Iraqi Security Forces command post where they live and work alongside their Iraqi counterparts.

*“For the most part,
these are just average Joes like anybody else...
they want to live a comfortable life, they want
to have a job, they want to raise their kids,
they want to have a normal work day, come
home...put their kids to bed and get up and
do it the next. They’re not any different than
anybody else.”*

Maj Benjamin J. Brown

Facing Page: When the photographer indicated his interest in a group photo, ISF soldiers flew from every direction so as to be included.

